

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ZAGREB 000048

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/WCI (PROSPER), EUR/PA/PD (HORNUBCKLE);  
INR/R/MR, PA-R/MR, EUR/SCE (NARDI), DRL  
BELGRADE AND SARAJEVO FOR POL AND PAO  
THE HAGUE FOR JOHNSON/KAYE/WHEATON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [HR](#) [KPAO](#) [KAWC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIAN MEDIA INTERVIEWS WITH S/WCI AMBASSADOR  
PIERRE RICHARD PROSPER

REF: ZAGREB 00014

[1](#)1. PER REFTTEL, ZAGREB REPORTED ON REACTIONS IN THE  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02                   ZAGREB 00048 091550Z  
CROATIAN PRESS ON THE JANUARY 2 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE  
UPCOMING VISIT OF S/WCI AMBASSADOR PIERRE RICHARD  
PROSPER'S VISIT TO THE REGION. TWO MAJOR CROATIAN  
DAILIES ON JANUARY 9 CARRIED INTERVIEWS WITH AMBASSADOR  
PROSPER.

[1](#)2. ZAGREB-BASED GOVERNMENT-OWNED "VJESNIK" CARRIED THE  
INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT BRUNO LOPANDIC ON  
PAGE 3 UNDER THE HEADLINE "AMERICA WILL ASSIST CROATIAN  
JUDICIARY ONCE THE 'BOBETKO CASE' IS RESOLVED." IN THE  
INTERVIEW, AMBASSADOR PROSPER STATED THAT HE STILL  
DIDN'T KNOW THE EXACT DATE OF HIS TRIP TO THE REGION,  
BUT THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD OCCUR IN THE "LAST TWO  
WEEKS IN JANUARY." HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT "WHEN ONE  
LOOKS AT THE SITUATION IN THE REGION, ONE HAS TO  
CONCLUDE THAT CROATIA IS THE LEADER IN FULFILLING ITS  
INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS. I REALLY BELIEVE THAT.  
HOWEVER, WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS IS THAT THERE ARE  
STILL A FEW OBSTACLES. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE ARREST OF  
ANTE GOTOVINA AND HIS TRANSFER TO THE HAGUE, AND THE  
'BOBETKO CASE.' ... THE KEY MESSAGE WOULD BE THAT  
CROATIA HAS UP UNTIL NOW BEEN THE REGIONAL LEADER, AND  
IT SHOULD REMAIN THAT WAY. LET'S WORK TOGETHER IN  
RESOLVING THE REMAINING ISSUES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND  
LEAVING THE ISSUE OF WAR CRIMES BEHIND US." ASKED TO  
COMMENT ON SUSPENSION OF U.S. ASSISTANCE TO THE CROATIAN  
JUDICIARY, AMBASSADOR PROSPER NOTED THAT "ONCE THE  
'BOBETKO CASE' IS RESOLVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
PRINCIPLES AND SPIRIT OF COOPERATION WITH THE HAGUE  
TRIBUNAL, WE WILL ONCE AGAIN GET INVOLVED IN WHAT WE HAD  
ANNOUNCED."

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[1](#)3. ZAGREB-BASED MASS-CIRCULATION "VEECERNJI LIST," ON  
THE OTHER HAND, CARRIED THE INTERVIEW AS ITS FRONT-PAGE  
HEADLINE "BOBETKO AND GOTOVINA MUST GO TO THE HAGUE."  
THE INTERVIEW BY "VEECERNJI LIST" U.S. CORRESPONDENT,  
JADRANKA JURESKO-KERO, APPEARS ON PAGE 3. AMBASSADOR  
PROSPER STATED FOR "VEECERNJI LIST" THAT HE IS "COMING TO  
ZAGREB WITH SINCERE INTENTIONS TO, TOGETHER WITH THE  
CROATIAN GOVERNMENT AND ALL THOSE WHO ARE CONNECTED TO  
THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL, TRY TO FINALLY RESOLVE ALL THE  
PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE PILED UP, AND THUS ONCE AND FOR ALL  
LEAVE THE STORY BEHIND US. I CLAIM THAT THE PROBLEMS  
CAN BE RESOLVED QUICKLY, IF WE ALL WANT (THEM TO BE  
RESOLVED). ... MY COMMENTARY IN CONNECTION WITH  
GENERALS BOBETKO AND GOTOVINA IS UNAMBIGUOUS, AND I WILL  
PERSONALLY PASS IT ON TO THE CROATIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE  
CROATIAN PEOPLE, AND IT IS THE FOLLOWING: LET'S RESOLVE  
THIS PROBLEM, BECAUSE WE ASSESS THAT THE WAITING PERIOD  
HAS EXPIRED, AND THAT'S WHY WE JOINTLY HAVE TO FIND A  
FAVORABLE SOLUTION BEFORE THIS STORY HURTS CROATIA EVEN  
MORE..." ASKED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER THE FACT THAT  
CROATIA IS IN AN ELECTION YEAR HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH  
THE U.S. INSISTING ON RESOLVING THE BOBETKO AND GOTOVINA  
CASES, AMBASSADOR PROSPER SAID: "WE KNOW THAT THE  
POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR ELECTIONS TO BE HELD DURING THIS  
YEAR OR AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR, BUT IT'S NOT AN  
ISSUE I CAN TALK ABOUT, OR SOMETHING MY COUNTRY MAKES  
DECISIONS ABOUT. OUR STANDPOINT IS THAT THE PROSECUTION  
SHOULD FINISH WITH ITS ACTIVITIES IN 2003, AND START  
BRINGING ALL OPEN ISSUES TO CONCLUSION." IN AN INSERT,  
AMBASSADOR PROSPER COMMENTS ON U.S.-CROATIAN BILATERAL

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RELATIONS AND SAYS THAT ALL HIS COMMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE  
"IN GOOD SPIRIT AND WITH THE WISH TO HELP CROATIA IN ITS  
DEMOCRACY BUILDING PATH TOWARDS BECOMING A STABLE  
PARTNER IN THE REGION."

[1](#)4. "VEECERNJI LIST" ALSO REPORTED THAT AMBASSADOR

PROSPER SPOKE TO THE BELGRADE-BASED "TANJUG" NEWS AGENCY  
AND STATED THAT HE DIDN'T REVEAL "WHETHER HE WILL,  
DURING HIS VISITS TO BELGRADE, ZAGREB, AND SARAJEVO,  
ONCE AGAIN INSIST ON THE SIGNING OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS  
ON NON-EXTRADITION OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS TO THE PERMANENT  
WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL."  
MOON

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